

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A distribution system including a distribution server
2 for distributing a content via a network, and first and second
3 receiving apparatuses for receiving the content via the
4 network, the distribution system recording a copy of the
5 content onto a recording medium and supplying the content to a
6 playback apparatus,

7 the first receiving apparatus comprising:

8 a first receiving unit operable to receive via the network
9 a data set including the content and control information
10 controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium,
11 and hold the received data set; and

12 a recording unit operable to generate authorization
13 information showing whether moving the data set to another
14 receiving apparatus is permitted, and record the content onto
15 a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule
16 information including (1) the authorization information, and
17 (2) the control information included in the data set; and

18 the second receiving apparatus comprising:

19 a second receiving unit operable to receive the data set
20 from the distribution server via the network, and hold the

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21 received data set;

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22 a data set moving unit operable to read authorization
23 information from the distribution medium, and (a) move the
24 data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the
25 second receiving apparatus, and (b) hold the data set, only
26 when the read authorization information shows that moving the
27 data set is permitted; and

1 2. -The distribution system of Claim 1, wherein:

4 the check-out unit includes a connecting unit operable to
5 connect to a recording medium, and is operable to record a
6 copy of the content included in the data set held by the data
7 set moving unit onto the recording medium when a copy of the
8 held content is not already recorded on the connected

recording medium, and the number of remaining check-outs shown by the control information held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set moving unit is at least one; and

the second receiving apparatus further comprises:

a check-in unit operable to delete, when a copy of the content is already recorded on the connected recording medium, the copy of the content recorded on the connected recording medium; and

an updating unit operable to update the control information by decrementing the number of remaining check-outs when a copy of the held content is newly recorded on the recording medium, and incrementing the number of remaining check-outs when the copy of the held content is deleted from the recording medium.

3. The distribution system of Claim 2, wherein:

the recording medium has an assigned unique identifier;

the check-out unit includes:

an allocation unit operable to allocate a unique identifier to the held content, the unique identifier being recorded onto the recording medium with the content when check-out is performed; and

a storage unit operable to read the unique identifier for the recording medium connected to the connecting unit from the

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10 recording medium, and store the read recording medium
11 identifier as a pair with the allocated content identifier,
12 and
13 the check-in unit includes:
14 a read unit operable to read, when a copy of the content
15 has already been recorded on a recording medium connected to
16 the connecting unit, the unique identifiers for the connected
17 recording medium and the content;
18 a comparing unit operable to compare the pair of
19 identifiers read by the read unit with the pair of identifiers
20 stored by the storage unit to determine whether the copy
21 recorded on the connected recording medium was previously
22 produced by the second recording apparatus;
23 a holding unit operable to read, when the copy was
24 previously produced by the second recording apparatus, the
25 copy from the connected recording medium, hold the read copy,
26 and then delete the copy from the recording medium.

1 4. The distribution system of Claim 3, wherein, when the
2 authorization information recorded on the distribution medium
3 shows that moving the data set is not permitted, the reading
4 unit is not operable to read the content and the usage rule
5 information, and

the playback apparatus plays back the corresponding content directly from the distribution medium, when the authorization information indicates that moving the data set is not permitted.

5. A semiconductor memory card used as a distribution medium in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a content via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, the semiconductor memory card comprising:

a volume area, in which a content and usage rule information are recorded, the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of the recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving the control information and the content to the second receiving apparatus is permitted.

6. The semiconductor memory card of Claim 5, wherein the content includes encrypted audio data and a corresponding encryption key used to encrypt the encrypted audio data, and the volume area includes:

a user data area that stores the encrypted audio data and can be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card regardless of whether the authenticity of the device has been recognized, and

a protected area that stores the usage rule information and the encryption key and can only be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card when the authenticity of the device has been recognized.

7. The semiconductor card of Claim 6, wherein the authorization information shows that moving the control information and content is permitted by indicating a number of permitted moves.

8. A first receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a content via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second

receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, and the first receiving apparatus comprising:

a first receiving unit operable to receive via the network a data set including the content and control information controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium, and hold the received data set; and

a recording unit operable to generate authorization information showing whether moving the data set to another receiving apparatus is permitted, and record the content onto a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule information including (1) the authorization information, and (2) the control information included in the data set.

9. A receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a distribution server via the network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a recording medium,

the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding usage rule information, and

7 the usage rule information including control information
8 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording
9 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a
10 data set including a paired content and control information to
11 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and

12 the receiving apparatus comprising:

13 a receiving unit operable to receive the data set from the
14 distribution server via the network, and hold the received
15 data set;

16 a data set moving unit operable to read authorization
17 information from the distribution medium, and (a) move the
18 data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the
19 second receiving apparatus, and (b) hold the data set, only
20 when the read authorization information shows that moving the
21 data set is permitted; and

22 a check-out unit operable to perform check-out when the
23 data set is held by one of the second receiving unit and the
24 data set moving unit, check-out performed based on the control
25 information in the held data set by generating a copy of the
26 content included in the held data set and recording the copy
27 onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the
28 recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.

1 10. A recording medium recording a computer-readable
2 program for having a computer perform processing as a first
3 receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution
4 system including a distribution server for distributing a
5 content via a network, a first receiving apparatus for
6 receiving the content via the network and recording the
7 content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving
8 apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution
9 medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording
10 medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the
11 content via the recording medium and playing back the received
12 content, and the program comprising:

13 a first receiving step of receiving via the network a data
14 set including the content and control information controlling
15 copying of the content onto the recording medium, and holding
16 the received data set; and

17 a recording step of generating authorization information
18 showing whether moving the data set to another receiving
19 apparatus is permitted, and recording the content onto a
20 distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule
21 information including (1) the authorization information, and
22 (2) the control information included in the data set.

1 11. A recording medium recording a computer-readable
2 program for having a computer perform processing as a
3 receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a distribution
4 server via the network, as well as receiving contents via a
5 distribution medium, and recording copies of a received
6 content onto a recording medium,

7 the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding
8 usage rule information,

9 the usage rule information including control information
10 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording
11 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a
12 data set including a paired content and control information to
13 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and

14 the receiving apparatus comprising:

15 a receiving step of receiving the data set from the
16 distribution server via the network, and holding the received
17 data set;

18 a data set moving step of reading authorization information
19 from the distribution medium, and (a) moving the data set from
20 the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving
21 apparatus, and (b) holding the data set, only when the read
22 authorization information shows that moving the data set is
23 permitted; and

24 a check-out step of performing check-out when the data set
25 is held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set
26 moving unit, check-out performed based on the control
27 information in the held data set by generating a copy of the
28 content included in the held data set and recording the copy
29 onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the
30 recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.

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1 12. A receiving method applied by a first receiving
2 apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system
3 including a distribution server for distributing a content via
4 a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the
5 content via the network and recording the content onto a
6 distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for
7 receiving the content via the distribution medium and
8 recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a
9 playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via
10 the recording medium and playing back the received content,
11 and the receiving method comprising:

12 a first receiving step of receiving via the network a data
13 set including the content and control information controlling
14 copying of the content onto the recording medium, and holding
15 the received data set; and

16 a recording step of generating authorization information
17 showing whether moving the data set to another receiving
18 apparatus is permitted, and recording the content onto a
19 distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule
20 information including (1) the authorization information, and
21 (2) the control information included in the data set.

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1 13. A receiving method for recording a computer-readable
2 program for receiving contents from a distribution server via
3 the network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution
4 medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a
5 recording medium,
6 the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding
7 usage rule information,
8 the usage rule information including control information
9 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording
10 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a
11 data set including a paired content and control information to
12 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and
13 the receiving method comprising:
14 a receiving step of receiving the data set from the
15 distribution server via the network, and holding the received
16 data set;

17 a data set moving step of reading authorization information
18 from the distribution medium, and (a) moving the data set from
19 the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving
20 apparatus, and (b) holding the data set, only when the read
21 authorization information shows that moving the data set is
22 permitted; and

23 a check-out step of performing check-out when the data set
24 is held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set
25 moving unit, check-out performed based on the control
26 information in the held data set by generating a copy of the
27 content included in the held data set and recording the copy
28 onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the
29 recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.